DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 414 996 PS 025 360

TITLE	The Status of Children in Oregon. 1996 Report Card.
INSTITUTION	Children First for Oregon, Portland.
SPONS AGENCY	Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD.
PUB DATE	1996-00-00
NOTE	13p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Children First for Oregon, 921 SW Morrison, Suite 418, Portland, OR 97205; phone: 800-544-0376; fax: 503-294-1806; e-mail: HN3156@handsnet.org
PUB TYPE	Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; Benchmarking; Birth Weight; Births to Single Women; Child Abuse; Child Neglect; *Children; Crime; Demography; Dropout Rate; Early Parenthood; Elementary Secondary Education; Family (Sociological Unit); Health Insurance; Housing; One Parent Family; Poverty; Preschool Education; *Social Indicators; State Surveys; Statistical Surveys; Substance Abuse; Suicide; *Well Being
IDENTIFIERS	Arrests; Day Care Availability; *Indicators; *Oregon; Vaccination

ABSTRACT

This Kids Count report card gives an overall account of statewide trends in the well-being of Oregon's children. The statistical report is based on 18 indicators of child well being: (1) childhood poverty; (2) health uninsured; (3) percentage of court-ordered child support paid; (4) affordable housing; (5) infant mortality rate; (6) low birthweight infants; (7) child care supply; (8) immunization rate; (9) confirmed child abuse and neglect cases; (10) child deaths; (11) crimes against persons; (12) teen pregnancy rate; (13) substance abuse rate; (14) juvenile arrest rate; (15) teen suicide attempts; (16) reading and math achievement; (17) high school dropout rate; and (18) percentage of high school students with significant involvement in professional-technical education. Overall results indicate that Oregon's grade worsened from a "C" to a "C-" in 1996. Modest improvement has been made in child care supply, infant mortality, and health uninsured, but there have been increases in the high school dropout rate, juvenile arrests, teen pregnancy, and suicide attempts. Only two of the statewide policy targets set in 1990 have been met, infant mortality and child care supply. The report also describes the Children First organization, its linkages with businesses and schools, and its citizen legislative agenda targeting families, education, comprehensive health care, and safe communities. (KDFB)

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REPORT CARD

The Status of Children in Oregon

Ages: 0 - 18 Year: 1996

Parents/Guardians: Residents of Oregon

This Report Card gives Oregonians a simple, accurate account of the status of life for the children in our state.

The Results:

Oregon receives a grade of C- for 1996

PS025360

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OUR 1996 REPORT CARD

OREGON RECEIVES C-

This is the fifth annual **Report Card on the Status of Oregon's Children**. In 1996, Oregon's grade worsened from a "C" to a "C-". This change in the wrong direction is a result of the very disturbing trends taking place in the teen years. While we continue to make some modest improvements for younger children (child care supply, infant mortality, health uninsured), we are failing our teenagers. As more Oregon teens dropout of high school, get arrested, become parents too soon, and take their own lives, we do not have the luxury of time.

BENCHMARK PROGRESS

This is our first opportunity to assess how Oregon is doing in meeting the 1995 statewide policy targets or "benchmarks" for children that were adopted by the State Legislature in 1990. Of the eighteen children's benchmarks evaluated in this report, Oregon has met and/or surpassed the 1995 target in only two areas: infant mortality and child care supply. However, we stand far behind many of the other benchmark targets, particularly for teenagers.

AGENDA FOR CHILDREN

There are significant opportunities in the coming year to raise our voices on behalf of children and families. As Oregonians enter another Legislative Session, grapple with complex funding issues, and evaluate the state's system of protecting children from abuse and neglect, we must all be vigilant to keep the faces of our 800,000 children at the forefront.

There is much work ahead. We hope you will join Children First in our continuing campaign to make Oregon a "Grade A" state for our children and families.

ENDORSERS

Amina Anderson, Executive Director, Black United Fund of Oregon
Les AuCoin, President & CEO, Oregon Health Sciences Foundation
Lawrence J. Dark, President & CEO, Urban League of Portland
Gun Denhart, Founder & Chairman, Hanna Andersson Corp.
Larry Griffith, President, League of Oregon Cities
Al Jubitz, Co-President, Jubitz Corporation
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Jan McCaffrey, President, Oregon Parent Teachers Association
Francis Somday, Executive Officer, Conf. Tribes of Grand Ronde
Joseph Tam, Member, Portland School Board
Duncan Wyse, President, Oregon Business Council

SUMMARY OF GRADES

Subject Area	Grade 95	Grade 96
INVESTMENT IN FAMILIES Indicators include: Childhood Poverty, Health Uninsured, Child Support, Affordable Housing	C	C
EARLY CHILDHOOD Indicators include: Infant Mortality, Low Birthweight, Child Care Supply, Immunizations	B	B
SAFETY Indicators include: Child Abuse & Neglect, Child Deaths, Crimes Against Persons	C	B
TEEN YEARS Indicators include: Teen Pregnancy, Substance Abuse, Juvenile Arrests, Teen Suicide Attempts	D	F
EDUCATION Indicators include: Student Achievement in Reading & Math, High School Dropouts, Professional-Technical Education	C	C

Overall 1996 Grade C-

How Grades Are Determined:
The letter grades use a point system based on an objective analysis of:
(1) Trends over four years (or more where data are available), and
(2) Comparison of the most recent year's data to the 1995 Oregon benchmark goal (where available).

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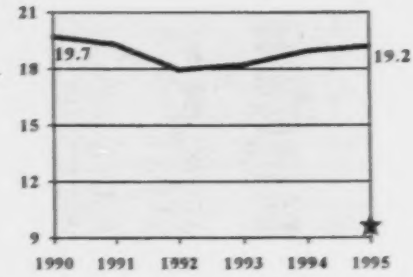
TEEN YEARS

Teen Pregnancy

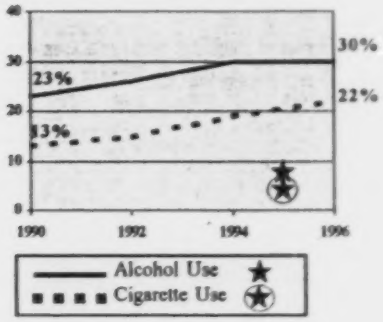
Pregnancy rate per 1,000 females ages 10-17

Over the last five years, there has been little improvement in the teen pregnancy rate, leaving Oregon 96% away from the 1995 benchmark of 9.8 per 1000.



Substance Abuse

Percentage of 8th graders who report using alcohol, or cigarettes in the previous month

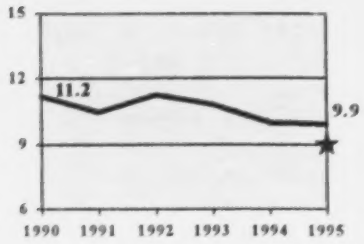


Cigarette smoking among 8th graders has increased steadily over the last seven years. Alcohol and illicit drug use are also on the rise.

★ 1995 Benchmark

Child Abuse and Neglect

Number of confirmed reports of child abuse or neglect per 1,000 persons under age 18

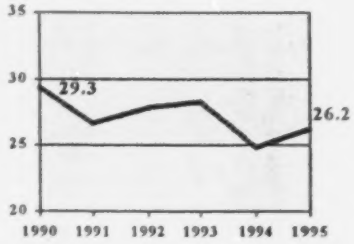


Although the number of confirmed reports of abuse and neglect has declined since 1992, there was a record high of 36 children who died from abuse or neglect in 1995.

Child Deaths

Number of child deaths (ages 1-14) per 100,000 children (ages 1-14)

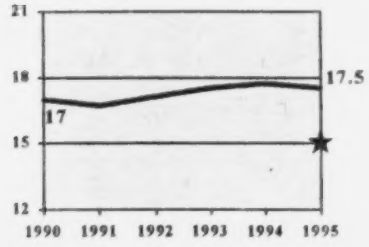
In 1995, 167 children died before their 15th birthday. The leading cause of death was accidents.



★ No benchmark exists for this indicator.

Crimes Against Persons

The number of crimes against persons reported per 1,000 Oregonians



The number of crimes against persons in 1995 is 17% away from the 1995 benchmark.

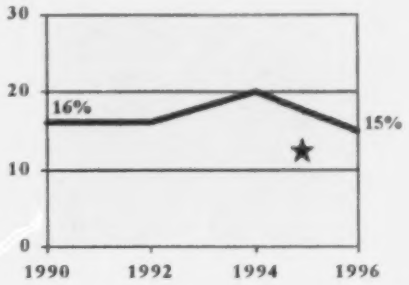
★ 1995 Benchmark

INVESTMENT IN FAMILIES

Childhood Poverty

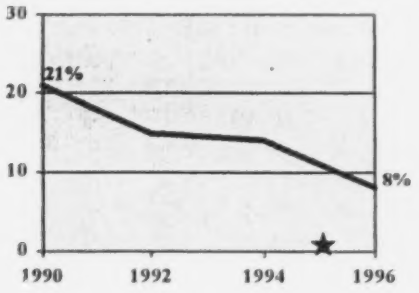
Percentage of children ages 0-17 years living below the federal poverty level

Although the poverty rate among children has declined since 1994, there are still over 121,000 children in Oregon who live below the federal poverty level ($15,455 a year for a family of four).



Health Uninsured

Percentage of children ages 0-17 years lacking public or private health insurance

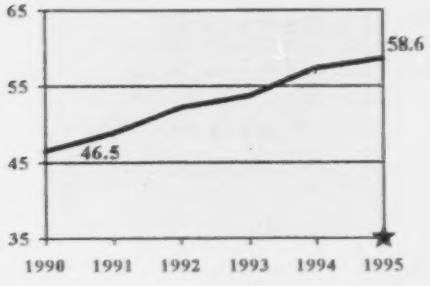


Since 1990, there has been a 62% decrease in the number of children lacking health insurance. Most children without health insurance have at least one parent who is working full-time.

★ 1995 Benchmark

Juvenile Arrests

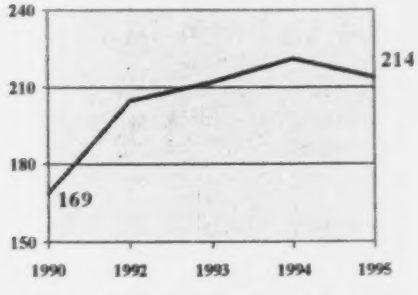
Juvenile arrests per 1,000 juvenile Oregonians



The juvenile arrest rate has steadily increased each of the last five years, with over 47,000 arrests in 1995.

Teen Suicide Attempts

Number of suicide attempts per 100,000 children ages 10-17



★ No benchmark exists for this indicator.

Twenty-seven Oregon youth took their own lives in 1995. Suicide was the second leading cause of death among 10-17 year-olds.

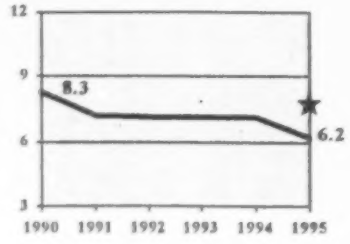
★ 1995 Benchmark

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Infant Mortality

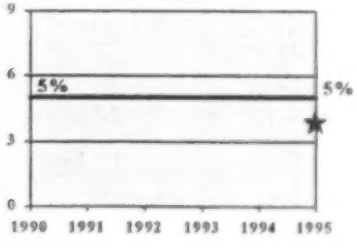
Number of infant deaths under age one per 1,000 live births

The mortality rate for children in their first year has improved 25% since 1990 and has surpassed the 1995 benchmark by 17%.



Low Birthweight

Percentage of babies born weighing less than 2,500 grams

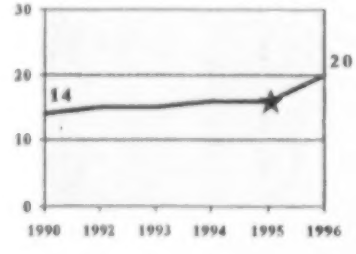


The percentage of babies born weighing less than 5.5 pounds has remained stable over the last five years at 5%.

Child Care Supply

Number of identified child care slots available for every 100 children under age 13

The child care supply has increased 25% since 1994 and has surpassed the 1995 benchmark by 25%.



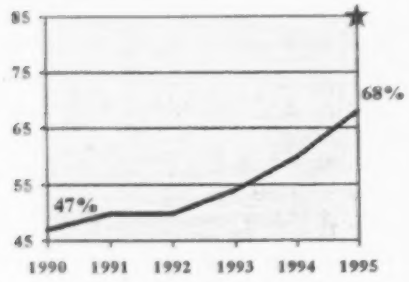
Immunizations

Although the immunization rate has steadily improved, one-third of two-year-olds are not adequately immunized against preventable childhood diseases (1995 benchmark is 80%). Data collected between 1991 and 1993 use different methodology than in 1994; yet, the Oregon Health Division estimates a 26% increase between 1990 and 1994.

★ 1995 Benchmark

Child Support

Percentage of current court-ordered child support which is actually paid to single-parent families who request it

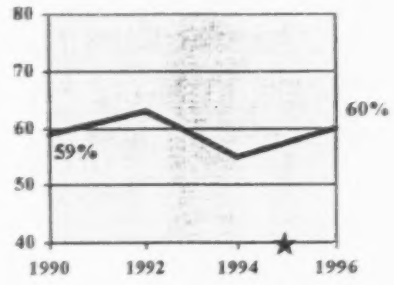


The amount of child support payments collected by single parent families has increased 45% since 1990, yet nearly one-third still goes uncollected.

Affordable Housing

Percentage of Oregon renter households with below median incomes spending more than 30% of their household income for housing

An increasing number of low-income families are spending more than 30% of their household income for housing.



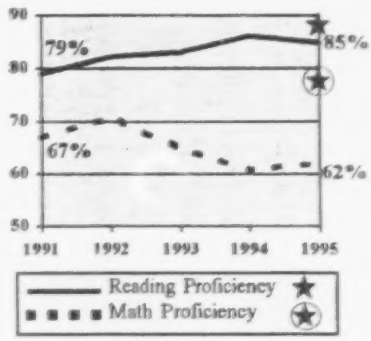
★ 1995 Benchmark

EDUCATION

Student Achievement in Reading and Math

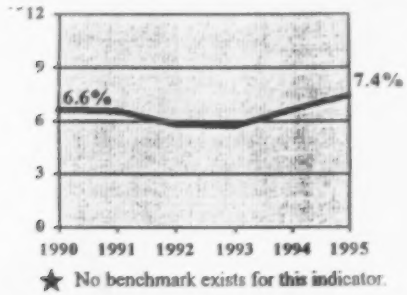
Percentage of 11th grade students who achieve proficiency in reading and math

While we are just 3% away from reaching the 1995 benchmark in reading proficiency, Oregon remains 21% away from the benchmark in math proficiency.



High School Dropout Rate

Percentage of students who dropped out of high school during the school year



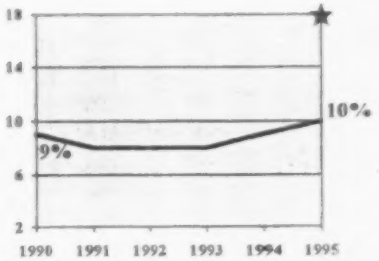
★ No benchmark exists for this indicator.

The high school dropout rate rose for the last two years after a decline between 1990 and 1993.

Professional-Technical Education

Percentage of high school students with significant involvement in professional-technical education

In 1995, 10% of high school students prepared for future employment through significant involvement in professional-technical education.



★ 1995 Benchmark

CHILDREN FIRST AGENDA FOR ACTION

Children First for Oregon is a statewide advocacy organization for children and families. Through public education, community outreach, public policy analysis, and advocacy strategies we work to make children Oregon's top priority. In partnership with children's advocates, business and civic leaders, lawmakers, and other concerned Oregonians, we seek to draw attention to the needs of children and to focus on positive cost-effective solutions. Below are highlights of our major projects in 1997.

AT THE STATE CAPITOL

For the 1997 Legislative Session, Children First has adopted a citizen Legislative Agenda that targets the following four priorities:

- *Support strong and capable families*
- *Provide quality education from preschool through higher education*
- *Enable access to comprehensive health care for children and families*
- *Build healthy and safe communities for children and families.*

Children First will work with other advocates for children and families on legislation impacting these priority areas with particular attention to budget issues related to the passage of **Measure 47** and **Federal Welfare Reform**. Contact us for a copy of our Legislative Agenda.

MAKING KIDS COUNT IN PUBLIC POLICY

As part of the national **Kids Count Project** funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, **Children First** produces timely policy and data reports on the status of children in Oregon to help leaders make informed decisions affecting Oregon's youth.

With the passage of the **Federal Welfare Reform Law**, Children First is working with the Pacific Non-Profit Network, Portland State University's Institute for Non-Profit Management, and other children's advocates throughout the state to ensure that as the law is implemented in Oregon, the unmet needs of children and families will be a top priority. This work is made possible by support from the Northwest Area Foundation.

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CHILDREN FIRST AGENDA FOR ACTION

WORKING WITH BUSINESS

Through the **Business & Family Campaign**, Children First works with companies to recognize the importance of making workplaces family friendly. We aim to highlight business gains through supporting healthy families.

The Families in Good Company Awards Event, hosted jointly with the state and local commissions on children and families, recognizes businesses that have demonstrated effective family-friendly practices.

families in good company

JOINING WITH SCHOOLS

Hand in Hand

PARENTS • SCHOOLS COMMUNITIES United for Kids

Children First, in partnership with the Urban League of Portland, has joined forces with schools to increase community involvement as part of the **Hand in Hand Coalition**. Mini-grants have been given to schools to support this effort, along with other public education strategies. This project is made possible through support of the Mattel Foundation and local business and civic groups.

JOIN US — BECOME A MEMBER

Join our growing statewide network of advocates for children and families. Your membership will support our public education, policy, advocacy, and outreach efforts to help put "Children First".

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Report Card made possible by a generous contribution from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.